



Red, White, and Green:

**Sustainability
at Colleges and Universities
Across the U.S.**

Introduction

This project was born out of a cross-country road trip in the summer of 2007 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the scholarship, fellowship, and internship programs of the Morris K. Udall Foundation. During this road trip, I looked at campuses across the country to see what folks out there are doing to establish sustainable practices on their campuses. I have noted that while there are ratings and there are networking groups, I have found little in the way of more extended vignettes about projects happening around the country, ways someone can get started, and resources to back them up. That is a niche this document is looking to fill.

We visited small campuses, large campuses, well-endowed campuses, not-so-well endowed campuses, campuses with established track records in sustainability, and some that are only just starting out. Campuses in all parts of the country, campuses whose sustainability initiatives are spearheaded by students, others whose efforts are led by faculty and administration. These descriptions of some initiatives at various universities are based on information from folks we met along the way

What I learned is that there are a broad array of projects, initiatives, and applications of sustainability at universities across the country and many ways to initiate change. Additionally, some universities have established sustainability programs; others are just beginning. Some regions of the country have more schools represented on sustainability leaders lists, and some schools that we look at here don't seem to be rated on lists at all. But no matter how many sustainability initiatives may exist on a campus, there is always more that can be done, and all can find a way to make their talents useful and their voices heard.

This article presents write-ups of the initiatives and perspectives of 13 campuses and key individuals we visited, along with a few of whose representatives we met along the way and which I feel deserve some mention, and I will reference other resources I've seen on the internet. I urge you to use these resources as you search for ways to make the best impact on your campus. For names of those we met, view the Udall10 blog: <http://blogs.udall.gov/>

This article will serve as a reference and resource guide, an idea bank, and will hopefully spur a discussion board to help anyone – student, faculty, staff, or alum, to help 'green' his or her campus. There are many sources of information about campus sustainability programs; it is my hope that a discussion board will be created to compile these resources and to exchange information and ideas real-time. I hope that this, along with other resources and rankings on the internet, help foster more great ideas and encourage the intrepid advocate of sustainability to go forth and create.

With wishes of success,
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Terms Used

CFL – compact fluorescent lightbulb. Burns energy more efficiently than your standard incandescent.

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. A ‘green’ certification for buildings.

PV – Photovoltaic. A type of solar energy capturing cell.

USGBC – US Green Building Council. Well-known for putting out its LEED certification for sustainable buildings

Arizona State University

At Arizona State University, money is backing up statements by the President to contribute to solutions for sustainability – here, you can find remarkable state-of-the art research facilities, multimedia tools, and testing grounds for research, decision making, and technology benefiting our environment. ASU sees itself as a vastly important part of the larger community context, at a large university in the nation's fastest-growing county. We were led by Rod Groff, the Program Manager for the Global Institute of Sustainability. ASU is a great example of where administrative priorities can make a large global impact for sustainability.

Housed in Arizona state's first LEED Platinum building, the Biodesign Institute seeks to address our sustainability concerns by conducting research in the areas of healthcare, public health, energy and the environment, and national security. Special design features of the building include more open space and windows, to allow flow of light and impromptu meetings for flow of ideas. The research conducted at the Biodesign Institute is cutting-edge, ranging from membrane biofilm reactors to cyanobacteria tubes in the desert to produce energy.

We were next introduced to the Decision Theater by Jon Fink, Chief Sustainability Officer for ASU. Walking in, we were given 3-D glasses to accompany our visual tour of the Decision Theater's 5 floor-to-ceiling screens. The Decision Theater is meant to be just that – it is meant to facilitate quick, sound decisions that affect our environment, city planning, and daily lives. We were guided through programs with toggle abilities for water consumption and drought, where planners can see the future projections for decisions they make now. We used the 3-D glasses for a virtual city model, where you can change building height codes, light rail lines, and see how these changes affect the city in real-time 3D. City of Tempe planning decisions that normally would have dragged on for months have been concluded in 1 hour here.

There is talk of collaboration with the City of Seattle and the University of Washington to build a decision theater, as well as talk with Dubai in the UAE, and with entities in China.

The STAR Center (Solar Testing and Research) is another gem of ASU's, geared towards finding solutions for alternative, renewable energy production. They had numerous kinds of solar arrays laid out in different patterns, with different types of rotational axes, all compiling information on solar capture efficiency and energy production. Two of the major problems with solar are that the up front costs are high, and that there is as yet no way to store off-peak generated power. There is still much that can be researched in the solar arena.

The Global Institute of Sustainability's website is:
<http://sustainability.asu.edu/gios/>

ASU also offers degree programs in Sustainability:
<http://schoolofsustainability.asu.edu/>

Bronx Community College of the City University of New York



In pretty much all discussion of campus sustainability, why are community colleges so staggeringly underrepresented? In 1999, there were 2,363 4-year institutions, and 1,721 2-year, according to the US Census Bureau. Fifty-three of those 1721 are members of AASHE, whereas about 200 of the 4-year institutions are members in the U.S., even though there are not 4 times the number of 4-year institutions as 2-year. This makes about 8% of 4-year institutions, and 3% of 2-year institutions members.

Perhaps it is the fluid nature of enrollment at 2-year institutions that makes it hard to garner student support for sustainability initiatives, but at Bronx CC, staff and faculty have stepped up to fill a niche in the community for providing sustainability educational resources.

In June, we visited the Bronx Community College, located in the Bronx borough of New York City. BCC has a Center for Sustainable Energy, committed to education, training, community involvement, advocacy, and policy analysis. BCC seems to have found its sustainability niche in its greater Bronx and New York City community outreach. We dropped in on a community energy efficient CFL lightbulb demonstration. BCC has Associate degree programs in Alternative Fuel Vehicle Technology and others, had a lead role in developing and implementing the CUNY Million Solar Roofs program, workshops for science teachers on alternative energy, training workshops on PV installation, and energy consultation services. They have been commissioned by a utility to help reduce grid demand – they are currently targeting commercial businesses. BCC is taking large strides to be a community disseminator of sustainability information, and it is a leading example of other 2-year institutions working to generate sustainability initiatives on their campuses.

BCC Center for Sustainable Energy:
<http://csebcc.org/>

College of the Atlantic



Listed #1 on Grist Magazine's Top 15 Green Campuses, College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, has demonstrated many ways small schools can make an impact. Because the concept of the school is based on an eco-consciousness (it's only major is 'human ecology' after all), many folks assume that environmental impacts are already taken care of. Students and faculty still work to attain sustainability, even at an eco-conscious school like CoA.

A Sustainability Director was hired 2 years ago. He and others students involved in sustainability issues find they still have to educate students about their responsibility. As they are doing that, they are looking into campus operations and how to make those more sustainable. They are looking into buying biodiesel equipment, such as a tractor for use on the community garden. The school is doing a carbon emissions inventory, working with Clean Air Cool Planet. They are looking at how to reduce consumption (using CFLs, eg), and at how to make each building more efficient. The campus uses green cones – compostable matter put into on-site digesters, to reduce waste.

John Deans, a CoA student, suggests looking at how to use the policy structure at your own school to your advantage. Student campaigns, he says, must target the institutional level, because students move on. This way, you can get something real and lasting accomplished.

Partnerships with other universities are also a good idea, especially regionally. CoA students had a 3-day Climate Change Conference with Bates, Bowdoin, Unity, University of Maine, and Smith at CoA. At the conference they came up with 3 action steps with due dates, including to assemble a student state coordinator position. Due dates are important, says Deans. They also put together delegation to attend the UNCCC (climate change conference) in Kenya

CoA's Sustainability Office can be found here: <http://www.coa.edu/html/sustainability.htm>

Cornell University



Cornell, as a land grant institution, has taken many positive and noteworthy strides towards sustainability – its establishment of a Sustainability office, its student involvement and student-run organic farming, and its administrative sustainability commitments all stand out as good examples of where universities can be looking to make positive changes.

If you thought students didn't make a difference, think again. Located in Ithaca, New York, Cornell's campus has acres of farms, including 12 acres of an organic student farm, which is run entirely by student volunteers. It started 10 years ago as a center for experiential learning. The farm sends its produce to local food banks, café's on campus, and extra is sold on campus.

But as with campuses everywhere, Cornell has many challenges. The campus uses 1% of NY's energy, primarily for the operation of its superconductor. Furthermore, much of its energy usage is dependent on Pennsylvania coal. But the students who formed Kyoto Now! At Cornell have pressured administration into taking notice of student demand for campus sustainability. In June, Cornell's President Skorton says that sustainability will be a major thrust by the university. 23% of produce served in Cornell's dining halls comes from New York state farmers (Cornell's Chronicle Online). According to one student, every movement at the university is student-initiated.

Say students – to be successful, the university needs to embed sustainability into the institution itself, providing funding, facilities, positions. The campus now has official Sustainability Coordinator positions, and they made a good move in hiring someone who was a grad student to ensure good relations with students.

Ding Kong, current student, suggests bringing different student groups together for on your campus. Oftentimes, sustainability movements are varied and lack cohesion. This cohesion is important for conveying your message to administration and to coordinating your

efforts. He also recommends looking to what needs to be done at your school – where are the weaknesses? At some schools, you might need to increase energy and drive. At others, you might need to increase cohesiveness and direction. Ethan Rainwater, sustainability intern, suggests trying to get a way for alumni on different campuses to be able to donate money for specific causes, like sustainability.

Cornell exemplifies ways different kinds of programs can contribute to sustainability. Many engineers at Cornell formed an organization: Engineers for a Sustainable World. This is a way that non-students, non-‘traditional environmentalists’ can get involved.

<http://esustainableworld.org/>

Cornell’s sustainability advancements can be found here:

<http://sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/>

Kansas University



I can tell you before I rolled into Lawrence, KS, that I had no idea to expect such a thriving eco-consciousness, just like I had no idea to suspect such a hilly landscape. There were initiatives taking place by faculty, staff, and students, and some noteworthy solutions coming out of these efforts – we focused on biodiesel and independent student living.

At KU, we heard about the KU Biodiesel Initiative, presented by Susan Stagg-Williams, Associate Professor of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, and Ilya Tabakh, of the KU Transportation Research Institute. The KU Student Senate provided money for this endeavor, the Environmental Health and Safety provided other resources, and the program uses campus waste oil as its initial input. They are also researching soybean, canola oil, tallow usage.

So far, they have been successful in implementing biodiesel use on campus. The bus fleet now runs on B5, and they are establishing a facility for biodiesel production. The KU student Alternative Energy Society was formed last semester, and things are taking off.

One thing that would make production easier, they said, is if the state regulating agencies were less disorganized about biodiesel standards and requirements. There is still a lack of consensus, and that is making it difficult to market and expand their biodiesel.

For more information on the Transportation Initiative, visit <http://kutri.ku.edu/research/>

At Ad Astra, student living takes on a whole new dimension. This cooperative, owned and operated entirely by students and not connected to the university, has taken on the preservation of an old house, converting it into a green building and green living community. The resident students are responsible for all aspects of developing and maintaining these projects, even for the work and maintenance, and even for ownership and leasing. The house uses many recycled materials and keeps getting more eco-friendly all the time.

<http://www.kansan.com/stories/2007/may/09/cooperative/>

Pennsylvania State University



At Penn State in State College, PA, we toured the new SALA (School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture) building, a new LEED Gold certified building. Penn State has a Center for Sustainability, and as a land-grant institution, they have a campus-wide composting program and many initiatives geared towards food.

At our tour of the SALA building, we learned how this building came to be LEED certified, as well as some of the pitfalls of that certification. Striving for LEED certification led to incorporations of innovations like parking lot bioswales and porous pavement and the use of local materials. This building reduced 35% of energy costs over conventionally designed buildings of its size, and 87% of the materials used were locally sourced (within 500 miles of Penn State).

So far, however, there is no forum to share what has been learned in the LEED certification and design process – the pitfalls, the successes. Furthermore, LEED does not reevaluate, once a building has been evaluated once, or for future changes with the building or the program. The designers of the building, and those who work within it, would like there to be a way to exchange notes and ideas about the relatively new field of green building. Additionally, as an architecture program, they would like there to be a way to provide LEED training and certificates to its students, but currently that option does not exist.

The building was built with almost no state money. Like in many institutions, there is a divide between those managing the building capital and those dealing with the operating costs. The latter love the idea of energy-efficient buildings; the former tend to balk at the 2% up front premium. The process the champions of LEED certification for this building used was to find a donor interested in sponsoring ‘green’, and to use the influence of the architecture department head, who was also on a university planning committee. Echoed by advice given at the University of Montana and Temple, it helps to have faculty and staff

passionate about these causes. Another suggestion imparted on us about getting your university to support sustainability efforts is that University presidents respond to one-upmanship. Green ratings are hot right now. Use them.

Additionally, Penn State's SALA has collaborations to do work outside of the campus. Collaboration with the University of Washington and University of Wisconsin have led to construction of straw-bale insulated houses in Montana, to test alternative and renewable means of insulation.

Partnering with local organizations, PSU's Center for Sustainability has many resources to work towards sustainability on campus:
<http://www.engr.psu.edu/cfs/>

Salish Kootenai College



Salish Kootenai College of Pablo, Montana – a tribal college – says that on a smaller campus, Farm to College local food efforts can have a faster impact. They’ve already gone from 0% to 10% of their food coming from local sources. Indeed, it is impressive, as many of the items on their regular menu, without undermining student food preferences, are now sourced by local farmers.

The goals of the SKC Farm to College program are to: “incorporate local foods into the menus of the dining room on campus, to get products grown within the Flathead Indian Reservation boundary, to excite college students about local foods, and to raise campus and tribal community awareness about the benefits of buying locally,” as stated on their informational brochure.

In doing so, they plan to support the regional economy, the health of the students, the farming and ranching heritage in Western Montana, the connection between the campus tribal community and its local food systems, and thereby decrease reliance on imported foods, reducing the amount of fossil fuels needed to transport foods long distances.

This program has help from a full-time Americorps position coordinating the SKC Extension Office, the Three Wolves Dining Room, and local producers. This effort is mirroring a similar program at the University of Montana, and their combined efforts make Western Montana an emerging force in promoting consumption of local foods. There is every reason to expect these programs to continue growing, as cooperation between farmers and campuses solidify and as more demand is generated locally

You can reach SKC’s Three Wolves Dining room:
<http://www.skc.edu/dining.html>

Temple University

At Temple, I was able to sit down and interview a couple major players in getting a large university like Temple to take on sustainability, and I asked them where they started and what kinds of advice they might have. Temple is a good example of where you can start when you are starting from scratch at a university – everyone, students, staff, and faculty, can take these steps and make large strides.

Local Udaller Josh Meyer has been helping Temple make strides into sustainability that we would like to showcase. He sits on the new Sustainability Task Force, which includes 1 undergraduate and 2 grads. This task force has been charged with developing a plan by Sept 1 to make Temple sustainable. There are other aspects of student involvement in Temple's sustainability efforts. The student government has an environmental committee. Temple is also integrating sustainability into its educational programs, including an integral part of the new Freshman curriculum.

The university has also been looking into ways to make its campus facilities sustainable. It has a recycling center, and it engages in sustainable landscaping. Josh Meyer extols the virtues of ensuring a good public transportation system, which encourages students and faculty to live nearby. He says this is not only good for carbon emissions, but also for developing a sense of community.

Josh emphasizes the ties to community as integrally linked with broader issues of sustainability. Good relations with the surrounding community helps keep people safe and involves the community in sustainability efforts. He has led community tree plantings, and there have been numerous neighborhood watch programs set up to reduce drug traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods. He has also seen the benefits of programs established nearby which provide mixed income housing.

Other suggestions he has for students looking to green their campuses are to look at what other universities are doing; don't reinvent the wheel if there is a blueprint out there. But also, he says, it's important to look at both the successes and the failures. It is also a good idea to look at other schools in the area to partner with.

When you achieve successes, it's important to publicize what's being done. If no one knows that paper recycling and eco-friendly landscaping are being done, there will be less excitement to carry them on, and there will be less support for additional programs. Good places to look for publicity are student newspapers and alumni magazines.

Says Ruth Ost, Temple Honors Program Director, "pestering is an undervalued skill." She says it is important to first build a network to gather support, a network of people who care about these issues. When starting from square one, she recommends finding administration on campus who care about sustainability, and pester them. She says it is important to show up, physically, and to persist. Once you build a network, it is important to strengthen your case and to advertise, whether that be through articles or through meetings.

University of Colorado - Boulder



Boasting a beautiful campus and an office to house their well-established Environmental Center, the University of Colorado's policies reflect much of the growing green of the surrounding town of Boulder, CO. Boulder, CU included, has committed to Kyoto protocol for emissions by 2020, participates in the Chicago Climate Exchange, and is promoting a PV field nearby.

The main attraction I would like to draw attention to at CU is the CU Environmental Center – having a place, an office, on campus is essential for integrating sustainability into the institution, for providing a place for staff. The Center began in 1970 and was founded by students. It currently employs about 50 students, half with the recycling program. It is student run and funded, but they have non-student staff to keep the Center running and consistent, because students come and go. This is another reason the staff at the Center emphasizes that having an office and permanent staff is important – continuity beyond the campus career of a student. They also recommended visibility – employing the use of costumes at festivals is a good way to get the word out in the community about the great things going on on campus.

Currently, the core focuses of the Center are on energy, transportation, and recycling. CU provides students with bus passes and recycles about 1600 tons of waste per year, with 800 bins and 10,000 desktide containers. The Center is also active in the community, providing educational programs, engaging in environmental justice projects, and leading toxic tours to educate the community about some of the dangers our natural environment faces.

To make these initiatives and programs successful, the Environmental Center says the bottom line is participation. This participation includes usage – educating people on campus to use recycling correctly, and encouraging good use of alternative transportation.

Today, 90% of students get to CU by walking, biking, bussing, or carpooling. There is a bike loan program with 0% interest. The Center emphasizes distributing information. I picked up a small but comprehensive Green Living Guide, with suggestions and tips on how to conserve energy and paper, and information about labeling mechanisms and consumer guides.

There are many other issues the Environmental Center is involved with, as well. Some of the other issues the Center is involved with is talking about alternative energy. The university electricity is once again largely coal-based, because of the financial savings over previous cogeneration facilities and the high costs of repairing old facilities. There is a new LEED Silver renovated student center. There is a model green room in one of the dorms. There is a CU Biodiesel Initiative whereby campus waste grease will be captured and converted to biodiesel. The fleet now runs on biodiesel.

The Environmental Center:

<http://ecenter.colorado.edu/index.html>

The Center has also issued a Blueprint for Sustainable Campuses:

<http://ecenter.colorado.edu/blueprint06/>

University of Montana



Missoula, MT – The University of Montana has much to be proud of – it is working not just on revolutionizing the food in its dining halls, but it is influencing the distribution of local and organic produce, even compelling SYSCO Montana to begin catering to the UM’s increasing local demands. If you want an example of a successful Farm to College food program, look here.

The initiators of the Farm to College program were grad students in environmental studies, who modeled it on a Bates College (ME) program. One of the initiators even traveled to Italy to look at local food systems there. As they began, they walked before they ran – they started with local foods events before eventually moving to integration with campus foods. Another example lies in their take-out boxes. They have been continually looking for a better and better product, since they have not found the ‘silver combostable bullet.’ They recommend taking steps, though, rather than waiting for the supreme solution to present itself. They also recommend having one charismatic, energetic, paid person to make these initial steps– it has made a world of difference in the uptake of the program.

When the program began in 2003, 7% of the UM’s food expense went to regionally purchased foods. Now, that percentage is at 15.6, and their new target is 20%. They now have solidified definitions for local (Montana) vs. regional (many neighboring states). They decided to include a regional designation so that schools in Seattle, for example, can include Montana as a regional partner as well.

For the UM Farm to College program, the term and goal sustainability is based on economic concerns, rather than environmental. This program has recirculated over \$1,000,000 into local and regional economies. This means that there is not as much organic food prioritized in the purchasing yet, but it also means that they were able to get many more diverse types of interests involved in their purchasing decisions. Environmental sustainability

ideals are present, and they do use a third party certifier for goods such as fish, to ensure they are supporting sustainable fisheries.

Some of the major players who get on board with this emphasis on the local economy are farmers and local politicians. Fortunately, state regulations do not lock UM to specific food sources, so UM has the flexibility to choose where they buy from. They use a growers' coop to help them find bulk sources. Products they buy include wheat, safflower oil, meats, honey, jam, tea, salsa, potatoes, choose, carrots, etc. They recommend that your school look at state regulations, however, for whether your school is bound by law to take the lowest bidder. They recommend that those laws be moved aside, because for some items, they have been paying a small premium.

For each year since the start of the Farm to College program, however, their food costs have been lower and lower. There are several reasons for this, even if some food commodities are slightly more expensive. For one, potatoes cost much less. Local beef is at a competitive price with their previous sources, but it is not as susceptible to the price fluctuations coincident with importing it from Canada. There is less waste, because the UM has more control over which products they buy, and the frequency. For example, they get bread deliveries 3 times per week now, instead of just once. Because there are no preservatives, they freeze it, and this way, they can store it to cover daily changes in student demand. Farmers have more pride in the products they deliver, students are attracted to the local foods put out because it is fresher-looking, and there is a reduction in overall food packaging. An additional benefit is that the individuals in food service positions at UM care very much about these issues. They feel that they serve the students, and when they get student interest and national groups coming in to look at what they're doing, there is increased worker motivation and pride in what they're doing. Plus, they get to meet the farmers themselves and learn where the food they're working with is coming from.

This program is student demand-led, the managers of Farm to College say, but there is an extraordinarily positive response from the administration. Our tour was personally welcomed by the university president, who justifies that this is "just the right thing to do." Universities increasingly need to look at the students as the reason they exist – their demand is important, as is their health. Universities are places to learn skills beyond the classroom as well. For many students, this is their first time away from home, and learning good eating habits now is important.

Some of the obstacles that the UM Farm to College program have come across relate to changing the structure of food purchasing. Farmers want to have insurance for a failed crop, and producers are unsure about how to wholesale produce that they may have only sold retail in farmers' markets. However, after a few years, farmers are beginning to approach the UM to ask what the UM would want to purchase. As this program has matured, SYSCO Montana has begun sourcing and distributing local goods. They still have a niche, because it is more efficient to get one truckload than to send several trucks out in many directions. Because of this, SYSCO is also now able to source local foods for other buyers in Montana and are expanding this similar kind of operation to other areas.

Taking a suggestion from folks we met at other universities, labeling which foods in the cafes are local would be a great way to give themselves some credit and track student preference. And they deserve a lot of credit – this is an exemplary program, and I am happy to share its successes with you.

To see the Farm to College program online:

<http://ordway.umn.edu/SA/UDS/index.cfm/name/Overview>



Our bus tour would not have been what it was without the pilot program begun by the University of Vermont's Extension to begin a green certification program for motorcoaches. By being involved in initiating incentives and recognition, the University of Vermont's Extension program is raising the bar for our country's ground transportation.

From among the UVM's many environmental sustainability initiatives, the one I will highlight is this one, in which the UVM's Extension is seeking ways to provide incentives for companies and organizations to take on measures of sustainability. In partnership, they have encouraged Lamoille Valley Transportation to use a B20 blend – that's 20% biodiesel, 80% ultra low sulfur diesel, and have an EPA 2007 compliant engine. This year, Lamoille Valley Transportation has also begun to purchase carbon offsets.

While these do not address the overall problem of emissions and our aggregate energy consumption, it is good to see incentives for different parts of our economy to begin taking steps to reducing our carbon emissions load. With each step comes another, and I applaud both LVT and the UVM Extension for their creativity and follow-through.

<http://www.uvm.edu/tourismresearch/biodiesel.html>

<http://www.uvm.edu/greening/>

<http://www.uvm.edu/greening/?Page=News&storyID=10813>

<http://www.uvm.edu/%7Eenvnr/>

University of Washington



Even a large university with a great commitment to sustainability started from somewhere. The successes of this large public university located in Seattle, Washington, began with the commitment of many individuals – students, faculty, staff, and administration.

When Professor Tom Hinckley's Center for Urban Horticulture labs were burned down, he wanted to build a new building, and build it right. This was before the day that there were any LEED certified buildings on campus. At the time, he was dealing with a highly skeptical administration which had no real previous commitment to sustainability, a low number of LEED trained architects, an Operations Department separate from the Capital Project funders, and only projections of energy savings vs up front costs over time. I remember this fight. I remember the importance of gathering support from other staff, from students, and of persistence. Even along the way, there were hard decisions to be made about where to meet a LEED standard – should wood be sourced locally, even if it meant foregoing a sustainable wood certification, or should it be sourced from far away? Eventually, he won his case, and Merrill Hall was built to a LEED Silver rating.

Merrill Hall was the first LEED certified building on campus, and it generated momentum to encourage the current UW administration, now led by sustainability-supporting President Mark Emmert, to adopt sustainability measures and develop an Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee (ESAC). It was even instrumental (I know – as a student, I used it in my persuading documents) in persuading the Washington State Legislature to pass a bill requiring all new state buildings to meet a minimum of LEED Silver. The UW now has several LEED Silver projects and one LEED Gold. There are now many more trained professionals to work on LEED buildings, and it is becoming a more institutionalized process at the UW, including having a LEED trained staff who works in an official position as the Sustainability Manager for Capital Projects. She joined us for a panel discussion in Merrill Hall.

But the UW has several different departments and areas working on sustainability, aside from LEED certified capital projects and the new ESAC committee – in fact, one of the main goals of the ESAC Committee is looking into finding cohesion in these areas and how to make them formal university policies. We got to hear from a panel of individuals representing many aspects of the university community working towards sustainability – the ESAC committee, Tom Hinckley, and administrators working in Housing and Food Services, Capital Projects, grounds maintenance, and at the UW-Bothell campus.

Staff working at UW Housing and Food Services have begun putting out newsletters demonstrating the strides it has been making towards integrating local and organic foods into its campus menus. Not only is HFS doing a great job of sourcing these foods, it is also disseminating information to increase excitement about them and get recognition for these efforts. They have had articles in the University Weekly mentioning their switch to compostable carryout boxes on campus, discounts on coffee when you use your own mug, providing a local biodiesel producer with their leftover cooking oil, and the availability of fair trade/organic coffee at most coffee shops on campus (It is Seattle, after all). They consistently say that student demand is driving their decisions – when students voice what they want, HFS responds. But clearly, there are staff at HFS who care about these issues, and not only can anyone make a difference for sustainability, but it's important to find those who care about these issues and generate avenues for them to create these programs, whether it is through official Sustainability Management positions or through broader changes in university policy.

Look for the “In the News” section:
<http://hfs.washington.edu/>

Other staff are making an impact on UW campus sustainability as well – Sterling Luke has been doing so in ways we didn't hear about on other campuses as an individual employee concerned about our environment and about the health of his pressure washing engine equipment. The UW has a Distinguished Staff Award, and Sterling won it for his extra effort and personal conviction in making sure the procedure he follows on his job is environmentally sustainable. He wanted to use biodiesel in his equipment but met resistance. After much persistence, he was reluctantly allowed to use it. He has found that his engine equipment now runs cleaner than it did before, and has gradually gotten a green light to keep increasing the percentage of biodiesel he uses.

The UW-Bothell has also been taking on its own goals for sustainability. Anthony Guerrero, who also sits on the ESAC Committee, spoke to us of the innovative ways UW-Bothell is looking to improve the campus, by eschewing the use of pesticides on campus, seeking a Salmon-Safe Certification for its grounds maintenance, and even by looking into the use of goats through the local Rent a Ruminant program as a way to keep weeds in check.

For other UW Sustainability resources:
<http://depts.washington.edu/poeweb/news/sustainability.html>
<http://www.washington.edu/about/environmentalstewardship/>
http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns/june05/league_luke.html

Vanderbilt University



Nashville, TN - Vanderbilt is looking not only to revolutionize its campus residency system to bring in local aspects of living space, but also to make that living space more eco-friendly to coincide with some of the changes the university is taking on in areas of energy. They also have exciting student and faculty-fueled initiatives to produce biodiesel on campus.

For the Vanderbilt Biodiesel Initiative, what began as small-scale production to power the WilSkills Club's outdoor outings has become a much larger operation – an operating facility is being constructed adjacent to the school's coal-fired power plant. What students from this club impressed upon us was that for them, success has been reached not by waiting for the support of the university, but rather by taking it upon themselves to ahead and produce the biodiesel they wanted to use, and then seeking ways to get university support. The research and production is all done by students and faculty.

The new housing concept at Vanderbilt is geared towards community, making community more tight-knit. New residence halls will be built with the idea of Houses, subdivisions within a dorm that break down the larger residence into communities. As part of a healthy community living space, Vanderbilt has seen the importance of building to LEED standards to not only lessen our impact on our environment, but also to improve students' esteem for their living arrangements and also to improve indoor air quality.

These projects show that there are many ways to have big ideas, and that those big ideas can be achieved with persistence and energy.

For the Vanderbilt Biodiesel Initiative:

<http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/wilskills/biodiesel.html>

To look at the new residency system:

<http://commons.vanderbilt.edu/>

Special Mentions

Dartmouth College

In Newsweek, Dartmouth had a spot as the ‘Top Green Campus’ – perhaps this has to do with its Big Green Bus, or perhaps it has to do with the fact that they have a high ranking in the College and University Sustainability Report Card. We met their Big Green Bus Crew when we were in San Francisco!

Find out more about their sustainability office here: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sustain/>

Washington State University

Washington State University was mentioned in my airline magazine on my flight home from Tucson – with a cover story about organic farming – as being the first University in the country to offer a degree in organic farming.

Find out more, and about other resource about organic farming, here:

<http://csanr.wsu.edu/Organic/>

<http://afs.wsu.edu/organic.htm>

Western Washington University

While working in Grand Ronde, Oregon, we worked with a crew leader who goes to school at Western Washington. She confirmed the rumor that, indeed, Western Washington students voted to raise tuition to afford purchases of renewable energy. Students can have more power than you’d think!

<http://www.westernsre.org/?page=history>

<http://www.wvu.edu/sustain/>

Other Universities Mentioned Frequently by Referring Sites and by Individuals We Met:

University of British Columbia:

UBC was listed on almost every sustainable universities website I visited:

<http://www.sustain.ubc.ca/>

University of California system:

An integrated system of sustainability, with campus coordinators on all campus. It is organized, institutionalized, and has a great network of resources. A built-in network of sustainability will help the UC system attain its sustainability goals:

<http://www.ucop.edu/facil/sustain/>

Campus Greening Resources

ASSOCIATIONS, REPORT CARDS

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education:

<http://aashe.org/index.php>

College and University Sustainability Report Card:

<http://www.endowmentinstitute.org/sustainability/CollegeSustainabilityReportCard.pdf>

Society for College and University Planning:

http://www.scup.org/resources/topic_issue/sustainability.html

AGREEMENTS

American College and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment:

<http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/>

Talloires Declaration:

http://www.ulsf.org/programs_talloires.html

U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement

<http://usmayors.org/climateprotection/>

Council for Environmental Deans and Directors:

<http://www.ncseonline.org/CEDD/cms.cfm?id=1496>

TOPICS

Food, Farm to College Programs:

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/procurement.html>

Recycling:

<http://nrc-recycle.org/curc.aspx>

Carbon Reduction Suggestions:

<http://www.carboncontest.com/>

Green Building – USGBC LEED

<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19>

Local Chapters:

<http://www.usgbc.org/Chapters/ChapterList.aspx?CMSPageID=191&>

Campus Climate Action – Clean Air Cool Planet

http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/for_campuses.php

Campus Climate Campaign, Network of Student Activists – Sierra Student Coalition (SSC)

<http://www.ssc.org/>

Sustainable Development Networks:

sustainus.org

Campus Consortium for Environmental Excellence (C2E2):

<http://www.c2e2.org/>

Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future:

<http://www.ulsf.org/>

EPA Energy Star for Higher Ed:

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=higher_ed.bus_highereducation

Consulting Ideas – Campus Sustainability Assessments:

<http://www.goodcompany.com/campus/assessment.htm>

National Association for Environmental Law Societies”

<http://www.naels.org/>

REGIONS

New England – EPA Colleges and Universities

<http://www.epa.gov/ne/assistance/univ/index.html>

New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability

<http://www.njheps.org/>

Associated Colleges of the South:

<http://www.colleges.org/>

Sustainable University Initiative of South Carolina:

<http://www.sc.edu/sustainableu/>